

STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

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September 15, 1977

Dr. Gil Omenn
Office of Science and Technology
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Gil:

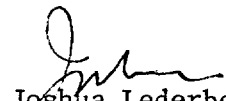
I have a letter from Frank Press dated June 21 which mentions, in passing, that his office "is making a study of basic research in mission agencies to see if goals of these agencies are being met by an adequate basic research program."

I am sure that you will have your hands full in trying to do this for the major agencies which have obvious life science connections. In the process, however, I hoped you would not overlook NASA, which I regret to say is undergoing some upheaval on precisely this axis. Over many years, I have had to observe that the agency goes 'gung-ho' for basic research, exactly when approved missions are in sight, and drops them during the intervals. The net result is a rather frustrating inability to make the timely preparations that can optimize our investments in these immensely costly missions.

The person who has the best perspective on this, from a biological science standpoint, is probably Richard Young at NASA headquarters (202-755-3732). Whatever else, I think you might be quite interested in many of the substantive details of the program that Dick is running. It has had a sometimes surprisingly basic orientation, but one which is to the greater benefit of the long term goals of the agency.

With best wishes, as always.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

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